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Guilty Plea Is Entered In Espionage Case Involving Arms Data

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SAN FRANCISCO — James Durward Harper Jr., 50 years old, a former Silicon Valley engineering consultant, pleaded guilty to one charge of conspiring to deliver defense secrets to Poland.

The change of plea from innocent came after a three-hour hearing at which Mr. Harper admitted his guilt and involved others in the theft and sale of documents and after two Federal Bureau of Investigation agents and a Defense Department ballistic-missile expert gave a summary of evidence against Mr. Harper.

U.S. District Court Judge Samuel Conti set May 14 for sentencing. Mr. Harper could get the maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

Mr. Harper pleaded under an agreement that provides that the government will move to dismiss eight remaining charges, including three of income-tax evasion involving \$250,000 to \$1 million he allegedly received from the Poles.

Under the agreement, the government will recommend that Mr. Harper be given a life sentence. Mr. Harper agreed to cooperate fully concerning his own espionage activities as well as the activities of "any other person" that a federal grand jury might ask him about.

In his statement to the court admitting guilt, Mr. Harper said that others involved in the conspiracy to obtain, deliver and sell the documents were his late former wife, Ruby Schuler, and five persons who haven't been indicted. Mr. Harper said Ruby Schuler obtained the documents from her place of employment, Systems Control Inc., Palo Alto, gave them to him for reproduction and then returned them to her employer.